



Affordable Housing and Climate Policy: Why Can't We Be Friends?



APA WA, October 2023

City of Olympia | Office of Community Vitality | Rich Hoey, Darian Lightfoot, Pamela Braff

Why can't we be friends?

- Opposing goals
- Too slow
- Too complicated
- Not enough buy in
- Community fears
- Competing for resources



We can be friends!

- Housing Policy is Climate Policy
- Health, safety, and cost of living
- Vibrant and thriving neighborhoods
- Leverage funding and staffing
- Synergy of projects – we are better together!

Topics

- 1. Organizational Structure and Values**
- 2. Examples of Programs and Policies**
- 3. Making it all Work**

Organizational Structure and Values

Creating the Foundation for Success

Olympia's Office of Community Vitality

- Housing and Homeless Response
- Climate
- Economic Development
- Community Planning and Development
- Public Defense

**Miscellaneous
Collection of
Programs or
Big Opportunity?**

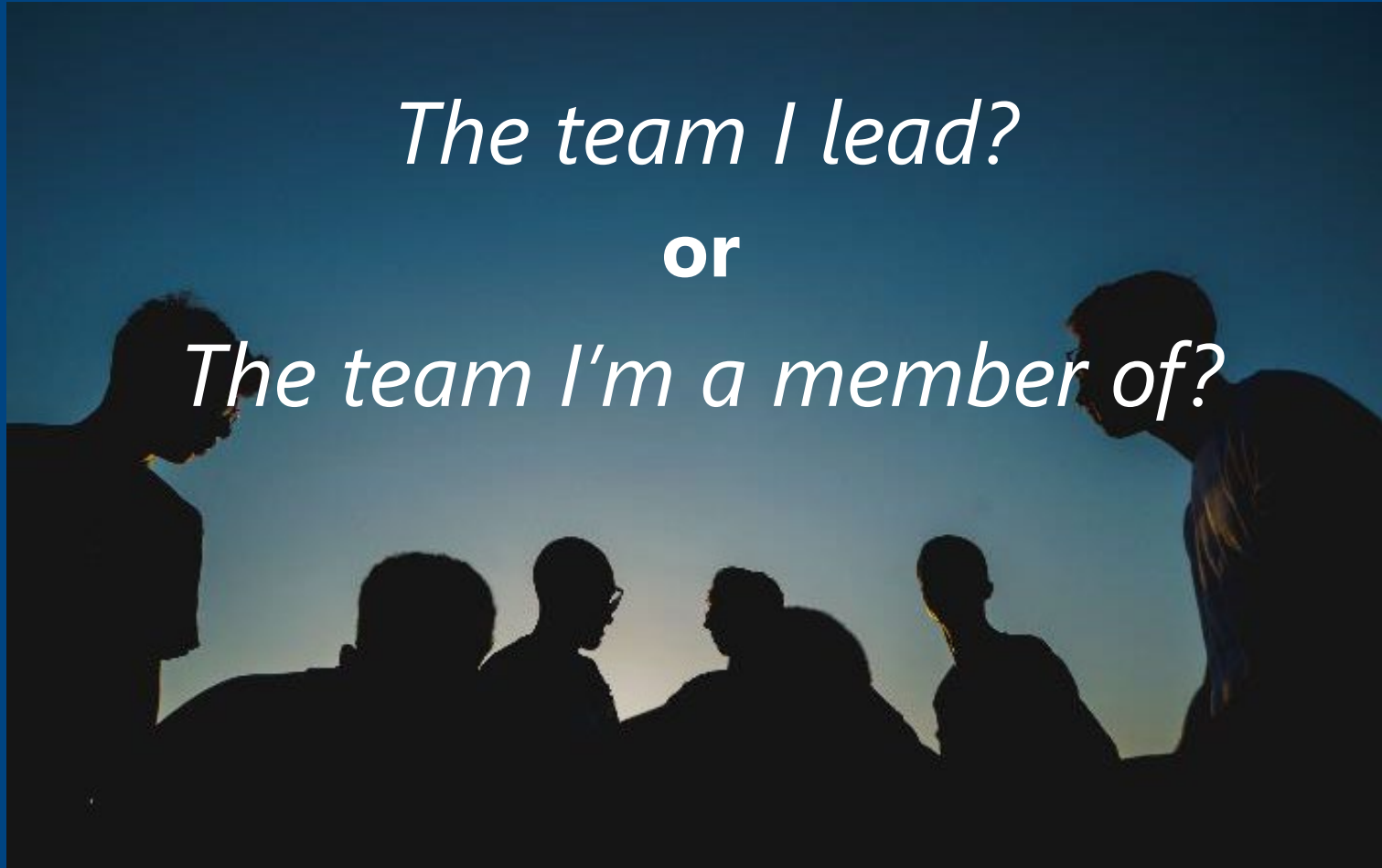
The First Team Concept

What's more important?

The team I lead?

or

The team I'm a member of?



Executive Team Values

We Are Grounded in Trust

- We provide a safe space to learn
- We engage in healthy conflict with each other
- All voices are at the table
- We hold our confidences

Exec Team Values, cont.

We Put the City First

- We lead with optimism
- We put the interest of the City above our own department or function
- We all have our say and support the final decision
- We are committed to each other's success

Exec Team Values, cont.

We Love The City, Our Work, Each Other and Our Employees

- We are kind, empathetic and joyful
 - We are accountable to those we serve
 - We have fun
-

Programs and Policies

Implementation in Practice

Climate and Housing Working Together

Finding Early Wins

- Quixote Village Solar Project
- Energize Olympia

Leading Change

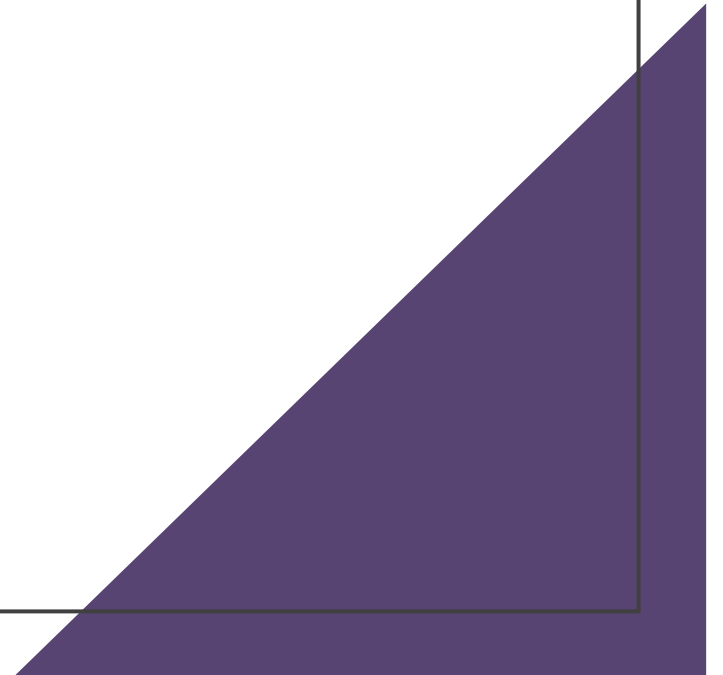
- Parking Reduction Standards
- EV-Ready Parking Standards

Funding Large Projects

- Reconnecting Communities
- Energize Rental Navigator

Finding Early Wins

- Quixote Village Solar Project
- Energize Olympia



Quixote Village Solar Project

Started small

- Needed gap funding
- Strategically align housing with climate goals

Clear win

- Trusted nonprofits
- 28 units, serving extremely low-income



Energize Olympia

- Ductless heat pumps (DHP) group purchase campaign.
- Educational workshops and program-exclusive incentives for residents.
- 2023 pilot resulted in 40+ installations, including 20+ fully subsidized for income-qualified households.



Why Heat Pumps?

- Highly efficient, all electric space heating and cooling.
- Like your refrigerator, heat pumps use electricity to transfer heat from a cool space to a warm space, making the cool space cooler and the warm space warmer.
- Will keep you safe and comfy!



Energize Olympia

Supports Climate Goals

- Reducing energy use in existing residential buildings.
- Replacing natural gas appliances with electric alternatives, to phase out natural gas.
- Providing cooling during extreme heat.

Supports Housing Goals

- Reducing energy bills and maintaining affordable housing.
- Improving indoor health, safety, and comfort.
 - Improved air quality
 - Lower-cost heating and cooling
 - Access to cooling

Energize Olympia

Components for Success

- Partnership between Climate and Housing
- Leveraging multiple sources of funding
 - Olympia Community Development Block Grant
 - WSU Community Energy Efficiency Program (CEEP) Grant
 - Habitat for Humanity Critical Home Repair Program
 - Olympia Revolving Loan Fund
 - Olympia Climate Program/General Fund

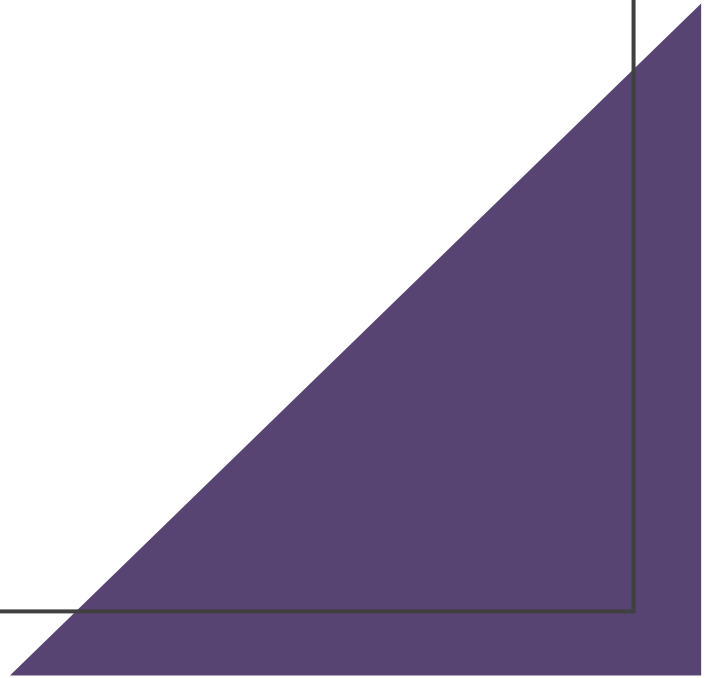


Collaboration – Finding Early Wins

- Funding gap meant finding partners
- Started small
- Building a culture that finds a way to say yes
- Collaboration is part of our DNA
- Collaboration moving from opportunistic to deliberate
- Early wins build momentum for larger, more ambitious collaborations

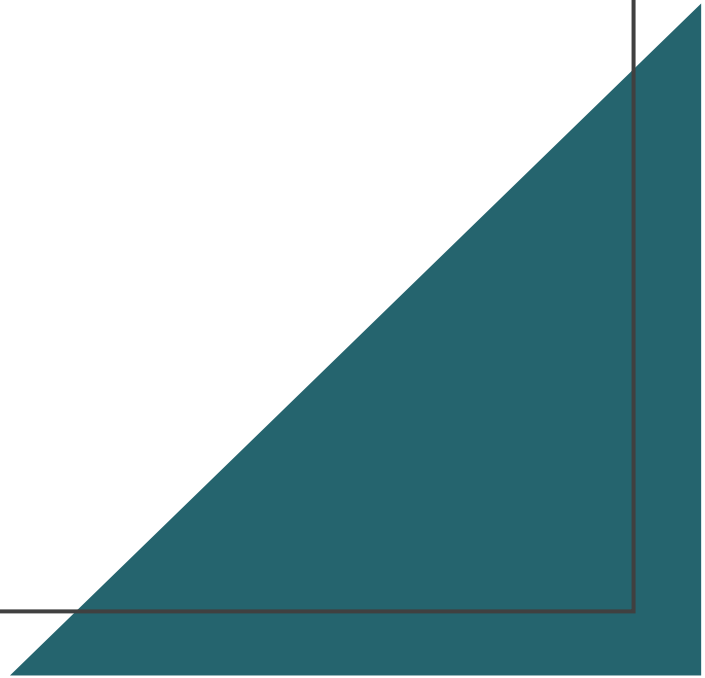
Finding Early Wins

- Funding gap meant finding partners
- Started small
- Building a culture that finds a way to say yes
- Collaboration is part of our DNA
- Collaboration moving from opportunistic to deliberate
- Early wins build momentum for larger, more ambitious collaborations



Leading Change

- Parking Reduction Standards
- EV-Ready Parking Standards



Parking Development Standards

Reduce parking requirements for residential uses, including for multi-family developments near frequent transit routes (Ordinance No. 7366).

Use	Minimum Parking	Maximum Parking
Single Family Homes, Duplexes, and Townhouses on individual lots	0.5 spaces per unit	N/A
Multifamily Dwellings (3 units or more)	0.5 spaces per unit	1.5 spaces per unit
Any residential development within half a mile of frequent transit routes (transit service 4 times per hour for 12 or more hours per day)	0 spaces per unit	1.5 spaces per unit
Any new residential buildings and uses in the Downtown Exempt Parking Area	0 spaces per unit	N/A

Parking Development Standards


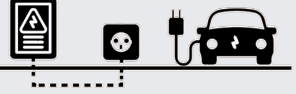
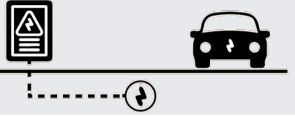
Supports Climate Goals

- Density makes it easier to walk, bike, and take transit.
- Building cities for people, rather than vehicles, helps make non-auto transport the first and best option.
- Preventing sprawl protects natural and working lands.

Supports Housing Goals

- Significantly reduces the cost of development, particularly affordable housing development.
- Urbanize and support density in a changing, growing city.

Electric Vehicle Parking Standards

Type of Building or Use	EVSE Parking (Level 2 Charging) 	EV-Ready Parking 	EV-Capable Parking 
Nonresidential (Group A, B, E, F, H, I, M, and S occupancies under Building Codes)			
	10% of total parking spaces	10% of total parking spaces	10% of total parking spaces
Residential (Group R occupancies under Building Codes)			
Buildings that do not contain more than two dwellings	Not required	One for each dwelling	Not required
Dwelling units with private garages	Not required	One for each dwelling	Not required
All other Group R occupancies	10% of total parking spaces	25% of total parking spaces	65% of total parking spaces

Electric Vehicle Parking Standards

Supports Climate Goals

- Anticipate that 99% of light duty vehicles in WA will be electric by 2050.
- EV-ready parking ensures that buildings are future-proofed to accommodate future EV-charging needs.

Supports Housing Goals

- More than 80% of EV-charging occurs at home.
- Relying on public charging is less convenient and more expensive than charging at home.
- Residents of multifamily buildings are typically unable to install home charging on their own.

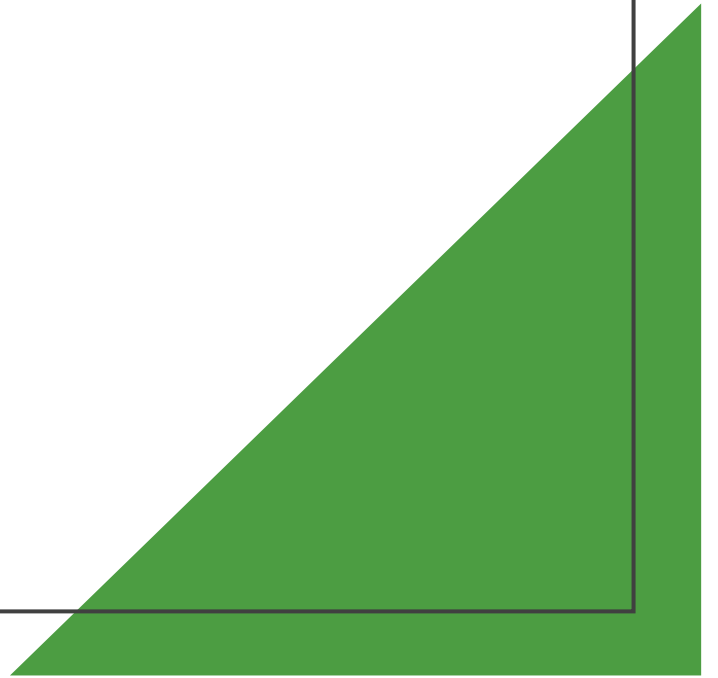
Leading Change

- Diverse Range of Public Comment
 - Concern over perception of increased on-street parking
 - Concern over changing look and feel of neighborhoods
 - Concern about increased density
 - Push for need to incentivize housing
 - Push for need to move away from minimum parking/car dependency
- Policy supporting multiple high priority goals (housing and climate) helped build majority support from Council.



Funding Large Projects

- Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods
- Energize Rental Navigator



Energize Rental Navigator

USDOE Buildings Upgrade Prize Proposal

- Submitted proposal in July for \$400,000 to develop a rental housing decarbonization and resilience navigator.
- The Navigator will work directly with landlords and tenants to develop actionable building decarbonization and resilience upgrade plans, and then provide ongoing support to increase the likelihood of implementation.
- Pilot: 5 multifamily and 20 single family buildings
- Full Scale: Comprehensive building upgrade support for all affordable rental housing units in Olympia over the next 20 years

Why a rental navigator?

- Split incentive between landlords and renters.
- Limited funding for renters.
- Complexity and hassle of multifamily and rental retrofits.

What we've heard from renters:

- The top three environmental health concerns are high heating costs or insufficient heat, high cooling costs or insufficient cooling, and mold (2022 Fair Housing Survey)
- It is helpful to have external accountability (most landlord-tenant protections are tenant-enforced), and many renters are disempowered.
- Fear that improvements could lead to increased rental prices and displacement.

Energize Rental Navigator

Leverages new and existing Climate and Housing programs:

- **Energize Olympia** is a heat pump group purchase program, which supports electric heat pump retrofits through community outreach, educational workshops, and program-exclusive incentives.
- **Rental Housing Registry** will require annual licensing and registration of rental properties, as well as periodic energy audits and health and safety inspections. The Registry will gather baseline data, help the City communicate more effectively with property owners and tenants, and remedy unsafe housing conditions.

Funding Opportunities

HUD Grant Proposal

- Focused on Affordable Homeownership
 - Admin Support for local Land Trust
 - Homeownership Counseling to local By and For Orgs
 - Downpayment Assistance
 - Capital dollars for future land banking

Rapid Capital Housing Acquisition Proposal

- Adaptive reuse
 - Generates more units into the system
 - Housing Policy Lab
 - Built environment impact, goals to retrofit

Clear proposal alignment

Supports Climate Goals

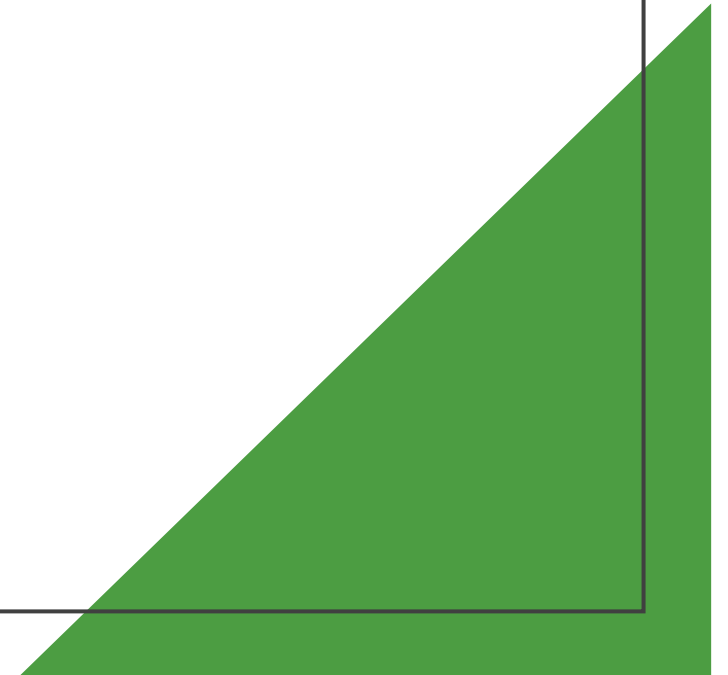
- Creating infill development
- Making the city more walkable and multi-modal
- Providing public financial support for solar or EV charging

Supports Housing Goals

- Adding properties to land banking portfolio
- More control on type of housing being built
- Targeted demographic for housing need
- Greater density in identified areas

Funding Large Projects

- Collaboration and relationships are enabling us to scale up
- New programs addressing declared emergencies = massive need
- Opportunity with new funding programs
- Need to be creative in your approach
- To compete you need regional and public/private partnerships and integration
- It Pays To Be Friends!



Making it all work

Leadership and teamwork



Leadership Required

- Addressing Homelessness, Affordable Housing and Climate is everyone's job at the City
- First Team Concept Required
- Culture Matters
- Systems Matter → Cross Departmental Teams can help

5 Behaviors of a Cohesive Team



Based on the work of Patrick Lencioni



We can be friends!

- Housing Policy is Climate Policy
- Health, safety, and cost of living
- Vibrant and thriving neighborhoods
- Leverage funding and staffing
- Synergy of projects – we are better together!



We can be
friends!

we could say

"FEED TWO BIRDS WITH ONE SCONE"





Rich Hoey

Assistant City Manager
rhoey@ci.olympia.wa.us

Darian Lightfoot

Director of Housing and Homeless Response
dlightfo@ci.olympia.wa.us

Pamela Braff

Director of Climate Programs
pbraff@ci.olympia.wa.us

